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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Tenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 May 1994, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. VYSOKAJOVA

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(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Morocco

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GE.94-16530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 4) (continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Initial report of Morocco (E/1990/5/Add.13; E/C.12/1994/WP.4; HRI/CORE/1/Add.23)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Benhima, Mr. Laghmari, Mr. Aboutahir, Mr. Najib, Mr. Badry, Mr. El Hachtouki and Mr. Benjelloun (Morocco) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco), welcoming the opportunity to enter into a dialogue with the Committee on the situation of economic, social and cultural rights in Morocco, said that the report (E/1990/5/Add.13), which had been scheduled for 1990, covered the period up to 1993. Its transmittal had been postponed so as to include an account of the important political developments of the past five years including: the adoption of a new Constitution in 1992, followed by communal and legislative elections. The core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.23) submitted to the Committee to supplement its report would be updated after the national census scheduled for late 1994.

3. In the meantime, Morocco had regularly reported to the International Labour Office on its implementation of International Labour Organisation conventions and recommendations, and the relevant information would be found under articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Covenant in the report before the Committee.

4. In June 1993, with the ratification of three more human rights instruments, Morocco had made its contribution towards achieving one of the major goals set by the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, namely, universal ratification by the year 2000 of all six United Nations human rights treaties. He wished to point out that, when ratifying the International Covenants on Human Rights, Morocco had not entered any reservations or made any declaration restricting the implementation of their provisions.

5. Among the innovations introduced into the revised Constitution of 1992 in addition to Morocco's existing guarantees of individual collective rights and freedoms there was the solemn proclamation of its commitment to the universally recognized human rights; a more judicious division of powers, giving greater authority to the Executive and especially the Prime Minister; the expansion of the prerogatives of Parliament; the institution of objective legal mechanisms by which the electorate could influence government action; the strengthening of the primacy of law; the replacement of the Constitutional Chamber by a Constitutional Council with greater powers, composed of eight recently appointed magistrates to rule on the constitutionality of laws; and the establishment of an Economic and Social Council, as a direct outgrowth of the Covenant, with broad advisory powers on economic policy and the protection of human rights.

6. Three other recent measures had served to strengthen the position of human rights in Morocco: the adoption of Act No. 41/90 of 12 June 1991,

setting up administrative tribunals initially in the eight economic regions of the Kingdom and subsequently in every province, commune and wilaya; the extension of the powers of the Consultative Council on Human Rights to encompass economic and social rights; and establishment of a Ministry of Human Rights, headed by one of the founders of the Moroccan Human Rights Organization.

7. He looked forward to an enlightening dialogue with the Committee, and assured it that any recommendations it made would be brought to the attention of his Government.

8. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to the list of issues (E/C.12/1994/WP.4) to be taken up in connection with the initial report of Morocco (E/1990/5/Add.13), starting with section I entitled "General framework within which the Covenant is implemented". The issues were as follows:

> "1. What steps has the Government of Morocco taken to ensure that structural adjustment programmes are so formulated and implemented as to provide adequate safety nets for the vulnerable sectors of society in order to avoid a deterioration of the enjoyment of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the Covenant?
>
> 2. Please indicate the role of international assistance and cooperation in the progressive realization of the rights enshrined in articles 6 to 15 of the Covenant."

9. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco), referring to issues Nos. 1 and 2, said that as part of its economic and social development strategy, his Government had established the following safety nets to improve the status of the sectors of the population affected by the structural adjustment programme: exemption of farmers from taxation until the year 2020; raising of the annual income tax base to 18,000 dirhams; creation in 1994 of a Rural Development Fund, with initial funding of 50 million dirhams; making rural school canteens more generally available, covering 1,410,000 pupils in 1992; making university scholarships more generally available; subsidizing staple foods; and establishing the food programme for mothers and children, 440,000 of whom had participated in 1991.

10. In addition, the National Mutual Assistance Agency was established to provide social services and training to the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, through some 1,300 social centres throughout the country targeting the following categories: approximately 145,000 mothers and children in 311 social and educational centres; approximately 9,000 pre-school children in 143 day-care centres; approximately 43,000 students (about 41,000 of them girls) in 438 educational and vocational centres and 22 vocational training centres with approximately 2,000 students; 30,000 persons in boarding homes (children, students and elderly persons) maintained by humanitarian Muslim associations; 960 young people from 9 to 20 years of age (603 boys and 257 girls) in three educational and assistance centres; and 4,065 disabled persons in associations for paraplegics (2,385) and cooperatives for the blind (1,680).

11. The National Promotion Agency organized gainful employment for poor and disadvantaged workers, especially in rural areas; each year it created approximately 66,000 jobs.

12. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank had provided assistance in carrying out and planning studies to allow Morocco to target its social programme of action more accurately and determine the safety nets needed. The 1994 Finance Act allocated a fairly large sum to promote social services, creating a special fund to promote the employment of young people, with a budget drawn from the privatization dividend.

13. Ms. TAYA said that a country such as Morocco, in the throes of a radical structural adjustment programme, should use taxation as a weapon to improve the situation of the poorest sectors of the population. She therefore asked for information on levels of income, property and indirect taxation in Morocco's national budget.

14. Mr. BENJELLOUN (Morocco) said that the tax laws had been amended in 1994, raising non-taxable levels of income from 15,000 to 18,000 dirhams. The maximum rate of tax had been lowered from 48 to 47 per cent thus protecting the purchasing power of the population. Indirect taxes accounted for 60 per cent of tax revenue.

15. Mr. SIMMA noted that the general political structure of Morocco was outlined in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.23, paras. 11 and following), where Morocco was said to be a democratic monarchy with separation of powers. No information had been given, however, on the process of legislation in Morocco. Elsewhere, he had read in a speech of 21 August 1992 by King Hassan II that the King himself was directly responsible for the application of the Mudawwana (code of personal status of women) and would try to mitigate the effects of some of its provisions. He would like to know whether the Mudawwana was a legislation with the force of law, how it had come to being and what the role of the King was in its implementation. In a democracy, it would have been adopted through parliament. Furthermore, in what circumstances could the King rule by decree and supersede the legislature?

16. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) explained that the Mudawwana was not a civil law but a set of provisions drawn from the Shari'a. It should be borne in mind that the monarchs of Morocco had for more than two centuries been both the political and the religious leaders of the country, their religious authority descending directly from the Sunni tradition of the Prophet. King Hassan had, therefore, on his own initiative entered into a dialogue with the women of Morocco, who as participants in the liberation struggle, now had to live in the modern world and play a role in the development and the political life of the country. He intended to explore ways of modifying the Mudawwana, but only in any of its purely temporal interpretations that might have been erroneous. The spiritual content of the Mudawwana, being divinely inspired, must of course remain unchanged, given the intimate status of religion in the daily lives of the citizens of an Islamic country.

17. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA said that he was not satisfied with that answer. Since the Mudawwana governed daily civil life, he could not accept that it was not a civil law. Paragraph 31 of the core document indicated that international legal provisions were incorporated into Moroccan law and that they took precedence over domestic law. The Mudawwana, as described by the representative of Morocco, was therefore in contradiction with the Moroccan Constitution. He noted in passing that Morocco had sent a large delegation but that it included no women and wondered whether that was forbidden by religious orthodoxy. His general impression from the report was that women lived in a state of absolute inferiority in Morocco and did not have the same rights as men.

18. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) reiterated the dual nature of the Mudawwana: it was a religious code of personal status which at the same time governed civil matters such as marriage, property rights and the like. Perhaps one had to be a Muslim to understand that what pertained to the divine could not be questioned, so that the religious values of the Mudawwana could not be replaced by any human law; but that the human spirit could correct erroneous human interpretations of divine values embodied in the Mudawwana. That was precisely what the King intended to consider.

19. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA observed that surely not all in Morocco were believers and he asked how, then, the Government could legislate religious beliefs and impose them on non-believers, which would violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Also, he did not understand how religious belief could be mixed with purely civil matters in a code that would apply to the entire population. He personally could not accept that the King as the direct descendant of the Prophet had that right. His concern was much greater now than after having read the core document.

20. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that the King acted in a clearly determined context within the tradition of the Prophet. The Constitution made Islam the State religion but it also recognized freedom of religion. The Mudawwana did not apply to Christians or Jews; they had their own special rules. Atheism, however, was not an acceptable moral position in Morocco, where it was considered a grave violation of public order.

21. He noted that there were many women in high positions in public life in his country. The country was modernizing at a pace that allowed it to remain rooted in the tradition of the Prophet and the Qur'an, in order to preserve values.

22. Mr. SIMMA said that it was difficult for the Committee to engage in a debate on the fulfilment of international legal obligations when one side declared its right to opt out of them by recourse to a higher law dictated by forces on which the international community had no influence. It was essential to broach the subject of the compatibility of the demands of the Shari'a when dealing with the question of the protection of the family and equality, and to understand in what circumstances the King could rule by royal decree.

23. Paragraph 37 of the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.23) mentioned human rights training courses for members of the police force and military and paramilitary officers. He asked for further details on the intensity, quality, quantity and duration of such instruction.

24. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether Moroccan civil law extended to persons of all religions, if it was equally applicable and whether there was any discrimination against women in civil law, within the family or in daily life. As polygamy had been abolished in Tunisia, she asked whether moves were afoot to follow suit in Morocco.

25. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that long-standing and deeply-rooted cultural and religious traditions could not be overturned by legislative measures alone and therefore progressive education of the population was a prerequisite for abolishing polygamy. The Qur'an allowed Muslim men to take up to four wives. However it also stipulated that he be in a position to treat them and love them equally, which made polygamy virtually impossible. Legislation had been introduced to try to bring marriage back to human proportions. One of the reforms of the Mudawwana was to restrict polygamy, allowing a man two wives, and only if certain conditions were met; the first wife had to agree to her husband's second spouse and the latter had to be informed that the man was already married. There was no discrimination in Morocco as all citizens were equal before the law.

26. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to section II of the list of issues entitled "Issues relating to specific rights recognized in the Covenant", which read:

> "Article 1. Right to self-determination
>
> 3. Please provide more detailed information on the implementation of the right to self-determination in your country, and describe how and in what manner this right is exercised in accordance with international treaties and obligations."

27. Mr. SIMMA said that in 1991, the report of the Human Rights Committee to the General Assembly (A/46/40) had stated that "Individuals had been sentenced for having rejected the idea that Western Sahara formed part of Moroccan territory, but it was possible that the King might exercise his right of pardon". He asked whether the King had subsequently exercised that right and how the Government of Morocco could justify sentencing individuals on the grounds of a difference in opinion on the legal status of Western Sahara, in view of article 19 on freedom of expression of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He went on to ask for details on the present status of the referendum to be held in Western Sahara, how many settlers had been moved there in the past 20 years and whether Morocco recognized that its presence in Western Sahara constituted an occupation in terms of article 49 of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and if there was discrimination against the non-Moroccan population of Western Sahara.

28. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that the question of Western Sahara could be understood only if it were placed in its historical context.

29. Morocco's attitude had traditionally been one of dialogue and negotiation, particularly with Spain which prior to the findings of the International Court of Justice had been the occupying administration in Western Sahara. Morocco was a unique case in terms of the European colonization of Africa. It had been occupied progressively and divided between Spain in the North and the South in the area which included Western Sahara and France in the centre. Subsequently, Morocco had recovered its territorial integrity in several stages, whilst the question of Western Sahara had remained in abeyance. The dispute with Spain over the territory had arisen over Spain's denial that the territory had been populated on its arrival. Morocco had taken the case to the International Court of Justice whose finding - to the effect that there had been such a population - had reinforced its conviction that Western Sahara was part of its national territory. The tribal population and its chiefs had historical ties of allegiance to the King of Morocco, the notion of allegiance to the King being the very foundation of the entire Moroccan monarchical system. Thus, Morocco, when peacefully entering the territory had acted and continued to act in the framework of international legality.

30. Morocco was fully committed to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. In its concern to resolve the matter internationally rather than bilaterally, it had therefore agreed to allow the United Nations, for the first and only time in its history (the situations in Cambodia and South Africa were not comparable), to organize a referendum on the ownership of the territory. The plan drawn up by the Secretary-General and the Security Council had not been satisfactory in every respect, but his country had accepted the settlement none the less. The main outstanding question concerned eligibility to vote. Its enemies claimed that Morocco was creating obstacles to a peaceful settlement, but on any rational criterion the inhabitants of the Western Sahara would vote to be part of Morocco. It was claimed that the number of people registered in the Spanish census of 1974 was 74,000, but it was notoriously difficult to take a census of nomad populations and in any case tens of thousands had left the Western Sahara during the Algerian war and taken refuge in Morocco. It was completely unreasonable to claim that the 1.5 million former inhabitants were ineligible to vote in the referendum, as some claimed; the many former Saharans living in Tangier or Fez had every right to vote.

31. Turning to the question of how many Moroccan colonists there were in the territory of Western Sahara, he said that the term "colonist" had a pejorative connotation and was not recognized in Moroccan vocabulary. Nor did he care for the word "settlement", which implied some kind of self-sufficiency, whereas in fact there was no possibility of planting or growing crops in Western Sahara.

32. Mr. SIMMA said that he had used the term "settler", not "colonist". His remarks, perhaps mistranslated, had intended to convey no undertone of colonization in the legal sense.

33. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that those who denied that the Western Sahara was Moroccan were Maoists, dangerous outlaws who espoused a different philosophy of development, putting themselves beyond the King's grace.

34. Turning to the issue of freedom of expression, he said that Morocco was one of the few so-called third world countries which repudiated the idea of a single party or a monolithic trade union movement, in contrast to so many countries in Africa and Asia. Morocco's was a pluralist society, in which there was open access to information and complete freedom of expression, including the freedom to criticize the Government. Only on three topics was there any restriction: attacks on the person of the King, on Islam and on Morocco's territorial integrity, all of which were sacred, were not permitted.

35. The CHAIRPERSON noted that there were no questions on the implementation of article 2 of the Covenant concerning non-discrimination.

36. Mr. TEXIER said that he had a question concerning article 3, regarding the right of women to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. He wished to know whether Morocco had tabled any reservation to that article of the Covenant or to the corresponding article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

37. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that in ratifying the Covenant Morocco had attached no reservation or interpretative clause. It was a measure of the extent to which his country felt itself to be innocent of any discrimination against women.

38. Mr. SIMMA said that Morocco was one out of a small handful of countries in which no woman had ever entered Parliament. He asked why that was so. Also, drawing on the 1992 report of the United States State Department, he said that women were equal under Morocco's Criminal Code, but not under family or estate law: a man could repudiate his wife, but she could not repudiate him; women were entitled to inherit only half as much as men; no women were to be found in positions of authority. He saw there an incompatibility between the Covenant and the laws of Morocco. Given that other Muslim countries, such as Egypt, had entered reservations to certain articles, it was hard to see how Morocco, which had entered no such reservation, could claim to be living up to its international obligations.

39. Mr. GRISSA suggested that the Chairperson should invite the representative of Morocco to answer the Committee's written questions before inviting supplementary, oral ones.

40. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that such matters as divorce and child care came under the heading of religious issues; Islam was, after all, both a religion and a culture, so the points raised by Mr. Simma were dealt with in the Mudawwana. He pointed out, however, that some changes had been made, placing restrictions on polygamy and laying down legal requirements that had to be met before a man could repudiate his wife. Such changes were admittedly recent, but Morocco wanted to proceed slowly and cautiously. In all probability the moves to modernity would continue, but his country was anxious to maintain social cohesion. The fact that over the previous few months an alimony system had been introduced, that women had been paid compensation for unjust repudiation by their husbands and that funds unlawfully withheld from them had been returned showed clearly that the King was fully aware of the importance of women and their great contribution to society. He added that since October 1993 there had been two women opposition Members of Parliament,

there were women advisers in ministries and in March 1994 a woman had been appointed as the chief spokesman for handicapped people. Morocco was proceeding at its own pace; he noted that Japan, while showing itself to be innovative and successful, remained a deeply traditional society. It was only a matter of time before women achieved the highest positions in Moroccan society.

41. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA asked whether the three matters that could not be called into question, according to the representative of Morocco, were more important to Morocco than its international commitments. He reminded the delegation of Morocco that the Committee had had dealings with other Islamic States, so was not unaware of the part religion played in their legislation. He had read the Qur'an, however, and could find nothing in it to justify discrimination against either men or women. He added that the Catholic Church also tended to make use of sacred texts to justify unfair treatment.

42. Mr. TEXIER said that as a secular, republican opponent of colonialism wherever it might occur, whether in East Timor or Western Sahara, he was not interested in philosophical justifications of Morocco's stance on polygamy, polyandry or anything else. The Committee could but note the progress that had been made and hope that it would continue; meanwhile it was clear that the Covenant was not being respected. Nor did he see any point in disputing the merits of the world's religions; the Covenant embodied universal values.

43. Mr. GRISSA said that as a Muslim himself he did not share the view that polygamy was part of the heritage of Islam. Certain aspects of legislation were predicated on specific circumstances: polygamy had been legalized 14 centuries before because mortality among men had been very high. But when the circumstances changed the laws could be changed, too. Neither Morocco nor Egypt nor his own country, Tunisia, any longer cut off the hands of thieves, although there was religious authority for doing so. Such legal provisions could be abolished without touching on Islam. Indeed, peoples created their own heritage; a suggestion that polygamy should be restored in Tunisia had caused outrage. The descendants of Mohammed ruled in the name of the law, not in the name of Mohammed. If Morocco wished to retain its royal form of Government, that was its own privilege; but it was not up to the King to interpret religion, which had its own interpreters. Religion should not be accommodated to the needs of man; but the law could be changed without refuting religion.

44. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that a major misunderstanding had arisen regarding the King's role with respect to the Mudawwana. As the depositary of Sunni orthodoxy and representative of the Malekite rite as practised in Morocco, his task was to oversee the evolution of the Mudawwana and not to apply it or to impose dogma. He took counsel with the college of ulema, a body of experts in Islam, and never took decisions without consulting them.

45. In reply to Mr. Texier, he said that his own role was to serve as a representative of the Moroccan Government, to take note of the observations made by the Committee and to transmit them to the authorities together with his comments thereon. For example, he would report the fact that some experts

had accused Morocco of failing to comply with certain provisions of the Covenant relating to the status of women. He did not contest the right of the Committee to make such criticism.

46. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to the issues under article 6, which read as follows:

> "5. Please provide statistical information on the level and trends of unemployment, particularly with regard to women, young persons, the elderly and the disabled.
>
> 6. Please indicate whether there exists in your country any discrimination in law or in practice on the basis of race, national origin, gender, colour, religious beliefs or political opinions."

47. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) provided detailed statistics for 1991 and 1992, broken down according to sex and age, on unemployment in the urban population. The totals in respect of 1992 were: 16.0 per cent for the population as a whole, 13.0 per cent for men and 25.3 per cent for women.

48. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN said that she wished to have a copy of the document from which Mr. Benhima had read out the figures, as it was very difficult to form an opinion on the import of a long series of statistics without seeing them on paper. She reserved the right to return to the subject when she had studied the document in question.

49. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) said that he had not had the written replies circulated to the members of the Committee because they existed in the French language only. However, he was more than willing to have photocopies made and distributed.

50. Mr. SIMMA quoted a passage from the Economist Intelligence Unit country report on Morocco for 1992 which stated that in late-October 1992 unemployed university graduates had held a meeting to constitute a national association to promote their interests. The association, which claimed that over 100,000 persons holding university degrees or diplomas from institutes of higher education were unemployed, was said to have the support of all opposition labour unions and political parties. Could the delegation provide figures showing how unemployment among graduates related to unemployment in the population as a whole?

51. Mr. TEXIER, referring to paragraphs 18 and 26 of the report (E/1990/5/Add.13), asked whether the Moroccan parliament had adopted the draft labour code that had been submitted to it in May 1992.

52. In its observations for 1993 on compliance with the ILO Employment Policy Convention (No. 122), the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations had stated that according to the Government of Morocco statistical surveys showed both an overall imbalance between supply and demand in the labour market and a lack of correspondence between the training offered and the qualifications demanded. What were the authorities doing to improve the employment situation which, according to the report, had risen sharply between 1987 and 1992, mainly owing to population pressure?

Commenting on youth unemployment, the ILO Committee had commended the establishment of the National Council of Youth and the Future (CNJA) and asked the Moroccan Government for information on the implementation of the National Plan for the Training and Placement of Young Graduates (diplômés). He understood that the plan had only recently been launched but it might nonetheless be interesting to hear about its initial results. The ILO Committee had further inquired whether the Moroccan Government had carried out its plan to set up a National Employment Agency. In that connection, there seemed to have been some disagreement between the authorities and two of the country's trade unions, the Democratic Confederation of Labour and the Moroccan General Workers' Union which claimed that the Government had no real employment policy but was giving priority to the structural adjustment plan demanded by the International Monetary Fund. He feared that such structural adjustment measures tended to be implemented at the expense of employment in general and to the detriment of the most disadvantaged groups in society in particular.

53. With regard to the status of women, he asked what proportion of women were in positions of responsibility in the higher echelons of the civil service.

54. Mr. NAJIB (Morocco), replying to the questions relating to article 6, said that the number of unemployed graduates was estimated at between 100,000 and 120,000. However, he pointed out that the term diplômé referred to anyone who had followed a course of higher studies after passing the baccalauréat. He added that caution should be exercised in assessing the figures because of the size of the informal sector, which was not taken into account. The official unemployment figure for graduates was 10 per cent of overall unemployment.

55. The draft labour code was a very complex matter involving trade unions, workers, employers, employers' associations and the Government in a nationwide dialogue. The draft had not yet been submitted to parliament because the whole of the former labour legislation had to be amended and modernized. However, the process would not take much longer and he trusted that an instrument of modernization and cooperation would soon be adopted.

56. Unemployment was a universal problem and Morocco had no magic solution to offer. It was working at the macroeconomic level to encourage domestic investment and attract foreign investors. It had introduced a National Promotion Programme under which unemployed young people in both urban and rural areas were offered productive employment, usually involving work on the country's infrastructure and basic facilities, at the minimum wage.

57. The National Council of Youth and the Future had made a number of proposals designed to promote youth employment. A Fund of 1,000 million dirhams had been set up under the 1994 Finance Act to finance small-scale programmes in that area.

58. There was no national employment agency but Centres for Employment Counselling and Information had been set up to replace the former employment

exchanges. The Centres would be launching a number of programmes designed to match supply and demand in the labour market. Eight centres covering what were called the "economic regions" had already been set up.

59. With regard to the criticism of government policy by the Democratic Confederation of Labour and the Moroccan General Workers' Union, he did not agree that the Government was turning its back on employment; there were however, certain budgetary and external constraints that made effective action extremely difficult. Trade unions were being involved in the formulation of the Government's employment policy through the recently established Economic and Social Council. Structural adjustment was admittedly associated with a decline in employment and a certain amount of social hardship. Those consequences were being offset by macroeconomic action to increase employment and social policy based on "safety nets" for the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, including food aid and assistance for the needy and for dropouts from primary and secondary education. Social spending in the budget had risen from 33.51 per cent of the total in 1982 to 40.8 per cent in 1992.

60. With regard to women in the civil service, a number of women had in recent years been appointed to the offices of Director of Central Administration or Director of Division. In 1983 there had been no women Directors of Central Administration. In 1994 there were at least ten.

61. Mr. GRISSA asked whether the high rate of urban unemployment was related to rural depopulation.

62. Mr. NAJIB (Morocco) confirmed that there was a very close relationship between the two. The unemployment rate in rural areas was 5.6 per cent and that in urban areas 17.6 per cent.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.